

percent of men have a pension. So when they do receive pensions, the benefit to women is only about half what a man will receive.

So what that boils down to is that when a woman received her Social Security retirement benefits in 2003, the average monthly benefit for a woman was only \$798, which is about \$241 less than the average man's monthly retirement.

What will happen to women, because we have got 20 percent of single women who are widowed, who are Social Security beneficiaries who are collecting Social Security today, about 20 percent of those women, the only source of their retirement income is Social Security?

We are just yanking out the security and the safety that we have guaranteed where we are going from a guaranteed benefit to a guaranteed gamble. And that is what the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) has been saying and leading us at the rally today and all the way leading up to today. We cannot shift the whole nature of Social Security from a guaranteed benefit to a guaranteed gamble. We have to keep the security in Social Security. That is the bottom line.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, no doubt about it. The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), in fact, today was at Columbia University, New York City, 300 young people at 8:30 in the morning. College students, when that alarm goes off at 7 o'clock, 7:30 when they are in college, they hit that snooze button and they hope they make their 10 o'clock class. But there is so much concern here for this, and we know it is resonating.

And I think this group especially, since the gentlewoman from Florida joined us specifically, we have had more of an impact here, but I think we have seen the polls and the decline in support by young people for this kind of risky scheme, this risky proposal. And I think we will continue to see it because they recognize the fact that long term this is bad for them.

And one thing I would mention to the people that are watching at home, ask themselves is this legislative body, is this President addressing issues that face them day to day, affect their day-to-day life? Are we dealing with issues that will help them? And I think the answer is no. We are not dealing with oil, gas prices. We are not doing anything to try to find alternative energy sources. We are not doing anything to increase funding for Pell grants or No Child Left Behind. We are actually cutting benefits for veterans. If a veteran is sitting at home right now, their copay is going to go from \$7 to \$15, and there are going to be user fees assessed to them. All these things are happening. So if people are sitting at home and they are not involved or engaged in

the political process at all, they have to ask themselves, "What are they doing in Washington, D.C. that is going to help my life?" And really nothing. We are talking about a manufactured crisis that is going to happen in 2042.

I want to read one quick e-mail. I know we have gotten hundreds of these, but I want to read one. This is from last week. "My name is Susan Parker." Susan lives in Severna Park, Maryland. She is 33, becoming ever more involved in politics. A few weeks ago she watched the dynamic trio up here on C-SPAN discussing why the Bush administration's plan was not good for the citizens of the country.

"I was glued to the TV. I started taking notes, and from those notes I e-mailed letters to my Representative, Senators, and several letters to the editor. Thank you, thank you, thank you for the inspiration and for speaking out so consistently."

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So these young people are starting to get involved, engaged, writing.

Before I part ways, I am going to have this hanging in my office. This is "Rock the Boat," the little coffee stand on it. "I Love Social Security." You can go to [rocktheboat.com](http://rocktheboat.com) and get some information, or e-mail us at 30-something Democrats at [mail.house.gov](mailto:mail.house.gov), or go to the Web site, [democraticleader.house.gov/30something](http://democraticleader.house.gov/30something). So this is it right here.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am sure glad the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) shared his closing there, and also showed us his sign.

This is something I picked up today: "Stop Privatization. Americans for Social Security." They have a Web site, dot com. It is actually good water.

Also, this sign here: "Keep Your Hands Off of My Social Security." I think it is important. We know whose hands they are talking about, those who want to privatize, not our hands.

I also want to say thank you, because it is important. The reason why the polling numbers are what they are and Americans feel the way they are now, we want to thank the American Baptist Churches, USA, AFL-CIO, ACORN, Campaign For America's Future, Center For Budget Policy and Priorities, the Center For Economic Policy and Research, Children's Defense Fund, the Coalition of Human Needs, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, the Economic Policy Institute, the Labor Council of Latin American Advancement, the Consortium of Citizens With Disabilities, the League of Rural Voters, the League of United Latin American Citizens, Links, Inc., the NAACP, the National Committee To Preserve Social Security and Medicare, the National Congress of American Indians, the National Council of Churches, and I can go on and on and on.

They are the individuals out there, individual Americans, that have taken upon themselves to carry the fight on.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank both of these gentle-

men. I am losing the prop board here, but I wanted to close by quoting the President. He said, "Leadership means not passing problems on to future generations and future Presidents."

This plan passes trillions of dollars of debt on to our children and our grandchildren, and it is time that we all exercise some leadership, come together and think about the direction that this country is going in, bring it back to the center, restore some balance, come to the table and compromise, and take privatizing Social Security off the table and not yank the safety net from under our constituents.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, that is what this is about. When the country goes in the wrong direction, the population, the population can shift it and move it in the right direction. That is what is happening here.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to be with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) again. It is wonderful being with you all once again. We would like to thank the Democratic leadership, mainly the Democratic leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), for allowing us to be here.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUH of New York). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

#### INSTITUTING TORT REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise in this Chamber and discuss here tonight what has been a part of my life for my entire adult years, and that is the legal system of the United States, the attitudes of the American people about the legal system of the United States and where we are going in justice for America.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege and the honor to serve as a member of the judiciary for over 20 years of my life. I had the honor to appear before good judges and good juries for an additional about 12 years of my life. I am and have been a part of the legal system of the United States of America. I am a lawyer, I am proud to be a lawyer, and I feel I come from an honorable profession.

But it is also the duty of those of us who practice in a profession, whatever